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**GREGG ANNOUNCES \$4.8 MILLION FOR RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP
BETWEEN MARINE SCIENTISTS AND COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN**

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) today announced that an organization focused on creating partnerships between marine researchers and the owners of commercial fishing equipment has received a \$4.8 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Northeast Consortium Cooperative Research will use the funding to continue its goal of undertaking research, the development of specialized fishing gear and the creation of programs that utilize commercial fishing vessels in oceanographic research. The Consortium, of which the Universities of New Hampshire and Maine, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute are members, brings together commercial fishermen in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank and Consortium researchers to further data collection and scientific study throughout the North Atlantic. As the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee that oversees funding for NOAA, Senator Gregg has secured \$19 million for the Consortium initiative since 2000.

Senator Gregg stated, "Given the uncertainty surrounding recently data collected to provide a snapshot of the health of fish stocks in the North Atlantic, programs like the Northeast Consortium do a tremendous job bringing together marine biologists and other scientists with local fishermen whose knowledge of the Gulf of Maine can be an invaluable resource. Never has there been a greater need for joint research projects, both to solve problems and to create a common understanding of the issues.

"These partnerships join two groups with the common goal of protecting a robust and healthy fish population in the North Atlantic. The unmatched local awareness of tide conditions and fish migration of the fishermen combined with the scientific know-how of the researchers bode well for the environmental and economic well-being of the Gulf of Maine and those that rely on it for their livelihood. This project proves that there is a productive way to bring fishermen and engineers together to solve common problems."

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According to Dr. Troy Hartley, Executive Director of the Northeast Consortium that manages the NOAA-funded grant program, this year there were 114 letters submitted proposing possible research projects. More than 250 fishermen from throughout the region have participated in a Northeast Consortium-funded research activity since it was established three years ago. Dr. Hartly stated, "Senator Gregg has demonstrated tremendous leadership in supporting cooperative research and recognizing its importance to fishing communities in New Hampshire and throughout the region, especially today as the industry faces an uncertain future. Fishermen and scientists are working together, coming up with innovative research ideas, and completing important research projects that are making a difference and advancing what we know about the oceans and fisheries."

Dr. Jonathan R. Pennock, Director of the UNH Marine Program, added that a key feature of the program is that it focuses both fishermen and researchers on specific problems. Dr. Pennock stated, "This type of partnership is essential to solving today's problems. Repeatedly, Senator Gregg has challenged us as researchers to use our knowledge to address real needs."

For further information, contact Dr. Hartley at (603) 862-1729 or Dr. Pennock at (603) 862-2921.

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